

Knowledge of the Rural People on Digital Literacy

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ABSTRACT

In this 21st century, due to much advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), everything has been digitalized. In order to utilize the maximum benefits of such technological advancement, everyone must have adequate amount of knowledge to perform different activities on digital mode. The study was conducted on 120 members of Jorhat and Golaghat District of Assam to assess the knowledge of the respondents on digital literacy and to find out the difference of knowledge of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy. It was found that majority (55.83%) of the respondents had medium level of knowledge, whereas 20.00 per cent of the respondents had low level of knowledge and 24.17 per cent of the respondents had high level of knowledge regarding the digital devices and services and there was no significant difference in knowledge of male respondents on digital literacy with the knowledge of female respondents.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Digital literacy, ICT, Rural people

I. INTRODUCTION:

In today's era of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has brought remarkable change in the lives of people in every respect also enabling government to deliver better services even at remotest corners of the country. Information and communication technologies have brought a revolution in the way information is produced, processed, stored and distributed. Due to advancements in ICT everything has been digitalized. Everyone must be digitally literate in order to reap the full benefits of such technological innovation. Having digital devices, on the other hand, does not imply that people are digitally literate. Digital literacy is defined as a person's knowledge, attitude and practice skills to use the digital devices or technologies in an effective way to perform different activities of life through digital mode and keeps them updated with latest

information. Many researchers found that digital literacy among women living in the villages have been almost non-existent. One out of ten internet users in rural India was a woman (Ganjoo 2022).

The increasing use of digital media in society has increased the demand for digital literacy among pupils. Digital citizenship is all about having a good attitude and confidence in using digital technology. The acceptance and maintenance of proper, mature, and responsible behaviour is required while utilizing digital tools and technology. ICT provides major opportunities to rural livelihoods through improving digital literacy and helping in reduction of poverty by increasing productivity of rural areas (Bhatia and Kiran 2016).

With a good knowledge and positive attitude towards digital technologies people can easily access online resources including online lecture, webinar, online training, videoconferencing, searching videos, social media, online banking, paying bills, applying for jobs, transfer money, online shopping by the use of online platform. Thus, people's knowledge level is very important to be very effective in this digital world. In order to meet the people's needs and to meet the country's benefits, it is necessary to find ways to increase the digital literacy level among the rural people. All of these will contribute to India's rural growth. Therefore, evaluation of rural people's knowledge level on digital literacy is important which will help the policy makers to plan different policies and strategies for the development of knowledge on digital literacy among the rural people which will help them to empower themselves in this technological era.

II. METHODOLOGY:

The present study was conducted in the Jorhat and Golaghat District of Assam. From these two districts, The Krishi Vigyan Kendra Jorhat, Kaliapani, and Krishi Vigyan Kendra Golaghat, Khumtai were selected with the purpose that these

two institutions are situated near to Assam Agricultural University. From these two Krishi Vigyan Kendras all the adopted villages were enlisted and then three numbers of villages from each Krishi Vigyan Kendras i.e 6 numbers of villages were randomly selected. From each selected village twenty respondents were selected randomly where ten were men and ten were women. So the total number of respondents was 120 numbers. The research design adopted for the present study is exploratory cum descriptive. Following a review of the relevant literature, a structured interview schedule was prepared to assess the knowledge of the respondents on digital literacy and to find out the difference of knowledge of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy. The schedule was consisting of 30 knowledge statements and the responses were scored as '1=Known' and '0= Unknown'. On the basis of the responses, the data were tabulated and analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical

tools such as frequencies, percentage, mean, category interval method and Independent t-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: Existing level of knowledge of the respondents on digital literacy

The findings indicated that majority (55.83%) of the respondents had medium level of knowledge regarding the digital devices and services whereas 20.00 per cent of the respondents had low level of knowledge and 24.17 per cent of the respondents had high level of knowledge.

From the findings it was clear that the respondents had medium level of knowledge on digital literacy. It might be due to their low exposure to mass media, low extension contact, low extension participation. Similar findings were also observed by Malakar P. (2021) and Raviya et al. (2020).

Table. 1: Distribution of the respondents according to the level of knowledge on digital devices and services N=120

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low level of knowledge	24	20.00
Medium level of knowledge	67	55.83
High level of knowledge	29	24.17

Statements known and unknown by respondents on digital literacy

Table. 2. The percentage distribution of respondents according to the statements known and unknown by respondents on digital literacy

Sl No	Statements	Percentage	
		Known	Unknown
1.	Digital devices make it easy to stay in touch with friends and family even if you are in another part of the world.	99.17	0.83
2.	With access to the internet huge proportion of the world's knowledge can be access instantly.	96.67	3.33
3.	Digital devices help to save lots of time in our personal lives by automating tasks.	94.17	5.83
4.	Online shopping is possible through different mobile apps	88.33	11.67
5.	Digital mediums like websites, apps, and other digital platforms keep people updated with latest information	85.00	15.00
6.	With the help of computer and laptop people can do many jobs from hundreds, or even thousands of miles away without difficulty.	83.33	16.67
7.	Addiction to social media, computer games, messaging, and dating websites can be hazardous	81.67	18.33

8.	Negative impact of digital devices are also there	79.17	20.83
9.	Financial details, personal photos, videos, internet account access can severely harm someone's reputation and individual identities with the wrong intention.	75.83	24.17
10.	Online gaming and movie streaming is possible with the help of Smartphone	75.00	25.00
11.	Radio broadcasts programmes in many language	74.17	25.83
12.	Any event can be recorded as a video in a smart phone	73.33	26.67
13.	Booking tickets for bus, train, plane is easier through smart phones	72.34	27.66
14.	Online business can be done with the help of different apps like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram	70.83	29.17
15.	Social networking sites have made cheaper and easier contact with our friends and family.	68.33	31.67
16.	With the help of digital devices, people can connect to the people who are in abroad.	66.67	33.33
17.	Internet can provide the latest information	64.17	35.83
18.	Different bills (electricity bill, mobile bill, DTH bill) can be paid through digital devices.	60.86	39.14
19.	Voice recording is available in mobile phones.	58.33	41.67
20.	Smart phone provides transaction facilities.	57.50	42.50
21.	Now different lessons and courses can be completed virtually with the help of digital devices	51.66	48.34
22.	Agriculture related information can be received through digital devices like smart phones.	49.17	50.83
23.	People can leave a WhatsApp group ones he/ she added to the group.	46.67	53.33
24.	Digital devices like smart phones, computers and laptops can be used for attending meetings, webinars, Videoconferencing	45.83	54.17
25.	Kishan Call Centre of government of India has free call facilities	43.33	56.67
26.	People can read e-book in mobile or laptop.	41.67	58.33
27.	With the help of Smartphone and computers, a patient can consult their doctor who is far away from them	36.67	63.33
28.	Smart phones can be used for assessing weather related information	35.00	65.00
29.	Call conferencing facilities are available in smart phones.	32.50	67.50
30.	GPS and mapping in smart phones helps during travel.	30.83	69.17

The table 2 indicated that 99.17 per cent of the respondents know that Digital devices make it easy to stay in touch with friends and family even if you are in another part of the world, followed by "With access to the internet huge proportion of the world's knowledge can be access instantly" (96.67%), "Digital devices help to save lots of time in our personal lives by automating tasks" (94.17%), "Online shopping is possible through different mobile apps" (88.33%), "Digital mediums

like websites, apps, and other digital platforms keep people updated with latest information" (85.00%), "With the help of computer and laptop people can do many jobs from hundreds, or even thousands of miles away without difficulty" (83.33%), "Addiction to social media, computer games, messaging, and dating websites can be hazardous" (81.67%). From these statements is can be concluded that people have the basic knowledge about the basic digital activities related to the

digital literacy. But they have low knowledge regarding the advanced technology related activities related to information and communication technologies like “People can read e-book in mobile or laptop” (41.67%), “With the help of smart phone and computers, a patient can consult their doctor who is far away from them” (36.67%), “Smart phones can be used for assessing weather related information” (35.00%), “Call conferencing

facilities are available in smart phones” (32.50%), “GPS and mapping in smart phones helps during travel” (30.83%).

So, adequate awareness on these aspects can help the respondents to increase their knowledge regarding digital literacy which will ultimately help in performing different activities through digital mode.

Difference of knowledge of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy

Table 3 Difference of knowledge of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy

Variables	Mean knowledge score	't' value	Sig.
Knowledge of male respondents	114.15	1.424	0.157 NS
Knowledge of female respondents	106.95		

NS= Non Significant

It is evident from the table 3 that there was no significant difference in knowledge of male respondents on digital literacy with the knowledge of female respondents. As the higher percentage of the respondents belongs to medium level of knowledge and there was not found much difference in their knowledge score between male and female respondents. Hence they were not significantly differing in possessing knowledge on digital literacy.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present study it can be concluded that a large percent of the respondents had medium level of knowledge on digital literacy. Also they have low knowledge regarding the advanced technology related activities related to information and communication technologies. It was also found that there were no significant difference between men and women regarding knowledge on digital literacy. In order to improve the level of digital literacy among the people, it is essential to improve to level of knowledge among the people which can be achieved by conducting different trainings and awareness programmes regarding the benefits of using digital device and performing activities through digital mode. As digital technology is effective in bridging regional gaps, lowering transaction costs, enabling real-time events, and providing precise information, people can get lot of opportunities for their development and of these will contribute to India's rural growth.

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